dangers to which they would have been exposed had the enemy's fleet been encountered in the open sea. They scaled the steel sides of the big battle ships from miserable little dingeys, often in rough weather, at the imminent risk of life and limb to obtain information from the commanding officers. A dozen times, prowling through the fleet at night with lights out, their tiny ships were mistaken for torpedo boats of the enemy, and fired upon or brought up standing, as it were, by a solid shot across their bows.

The Government Censorship.

The government maintained a most vigorous censorship of all press matter at Key West to prevent news of the movements of our fleet from reaching the enemy, and it is a credit to the patriotism of the newspaper correspondents that, except in the earlier stages of the war, when the full gravity of the situation was less understood, none of them ever attempted to send news which could serve Spain's purpose. But when Sampson sailed for Porto Rico some of the correspondents stationed at Key West, driven to desperation by their inability to get within eighty miles of the blockade, resorted to all sorts of ruses to elude the vigilance of the Key West censor, who, at that time, was Lieut. Col. Allen of the signal corps. He had placed an embargo on everything relating to Sampson's departure for San Juan. In his effort to get the news through to his paper one of the correspondents filed a message saying that Sampson had sailed with his fleet for Havana. This, of course, would have been unobjectionable because it was untrue. An hour later he filed another message to his paper to strike out Havana in his first dispatch and insert San Juan. Col. Allen penetrated the scheme, and the correspondent was highly disgusted when, at

THE OLD WAR DEPARTMENT.

dinner time, the censor in the presence of all his newspaper associates stepped up to the correspondents' table and handed back both dispatches. The only correspondent who really managed to get the information through was balked by the stupidity of his managing editor in New York. He wired him a personal message as follows:

"Tell my father to send my valise to San Juan." Finding it had been sent the correspondent had visions of a big beat on his rivals. The next day his chagrin was sulphurous when he received the following reply from his managing editor: "Can't find your father; send better address." But by this time Col. Allen had "tumbled" and the correspondent was not allowed to try again.

Before Santiago.

When Cervera was "bottled up" in Santiago harbor the correspondents, with their fleet of newspaper boats, went around to the south side of Cuba and for a month stood guard with our naval heroes before Santiago. During this time they used the English island of Jamaica, which was touched by two cables, or the neighboring island of Haiti, which had one cable, as their base of communication and supply. Whenever a bombardment occurred they raced with their stories to Jamaica or Haiti fast as steam could drive them. Some of these races between the dispatch boats have become famous in the newspaper annals of the war. On one occasion the correspondents aboard a tug, which was falling behind, descended into the stokehole to relieve the exhausted stokers. Cable facilities were so limited that many times a correspondent reached Jamaica with an important story only to find the cable blocked with other matter. When the Merrimac was sunk in the mouth of Santiago harbor the Associated Press dispatch boat Dauntless reached Jamaica with the thrilling story several hours ahead of any of the other boats, but the exulting correspondents aboard found the cable to New York via Halifax, which was the most direct route, jammed with press dispatches for hours ahead. The cable tolls via Halifax were 50 cents a word. The other Jamaica cable touched the mainland at Colon on the Isthmus of Panama, and the rate to New York over that route was $1.69 a word. Previous to this time this latter route had been used only in emergencies for brief bulletins. The correspondents, however, made up their minds at once. They were in possession of the first big story of the Cuban campaign, and without hesitation they filed the whole account of over 5,000 words via Colon. That single dispatch cost the Associated Press and its clientele almost $9,000.

Telegraphic Difficulties.

The troubles which the correspondents experienced in Jamaica and Haiti in revolutionizing methods down there would fill columns. Some of them were humorous, but the majority were enough to drive the energetic Yankees, accustomed to having things done, to exasperation bordering upon despair. The telegraph operators on the land lines were women, whose speed in sending was not in excess of fifteen words a minute.

To newspaper men accustomed to code operators capable of sending 100 words a minute only the sex of the operators prevented actual murder. Besides the telegraph offices at first were only open from 9 to 11 in the morning and from 3 to 6 in the afternoon. Heroic measures had to be employed—heroic measures and Yankee gold—with the result that before the war was over the telegraph offices were never closed and even the railroad lines had been pressed into service. The lavish fashion in which money was spent to accomplish results convinced the English on the island that if every Yankee was rich every newspaper correspondent was a veritable Croesus.

Besides these difficulties due to inefficient and insufficient cable and telegraph facilities the correspondents had an immense amount of trouble with certain dishonest cable operators who looked upon the war as an opportunity to fortune not to be neglected. They accepted bribes right and left, but the sorriest feature of it for the newspaper men was that they would not "stay bought." The brazen dishonesty of some became so notorious that the correspondents, after several heart-breaking experiences, shunned their place as if it had been infected with the plague. Even after cable communication was established at another place by the lines of the same company their questionable practices were continued and upon at least one occasion a newspaper correspondent, who had beaten his rival to the wire, was obliged to stand over the operator with a loaded revolver to persuade him to send his dispatch, filed first, ahead of that of his rival in whose pay the operator was.

Battles Ashore.

When the actual fighting ashore began first at Guasimas and later before Santiago the correspondents who had come with Shafter's army and who were working in conjunction with the dispatch boats sent their stories down to Siboney from the front, whence they were conveyed by boat to Jamaica. After the first brush between the Rough Riders and the Spaniards at Guasimas, where young Capron, young Jim Fisk and many others were killed, the correspondents came tumbling down the hills in their mad rush to reach the dispatch boats. The surf was booming, and it was almost impossible to get a row boat ashore. A correspondent of the Associated Press, finding that the yawl sent for him could not make a landing, plunged into the breakers and was half drowned when he was hauled aboard. At San Juan and El Caney in the first day's fighting before Santiago, many of the correspondents, regardless of the fact that a dead correspondent is not an available asset for a live newspaper, pushed along with the advance lines in their eagerness to obtain information, and several of them were wounded. That night, while the soldiers rested, the correspondents, footsore and weary as they were, had to plod about through the dead and dying in the hospitals, write their stories and then trudge ten miles to Siboney to turn them over to the dispatch boats. Only a favored few of the correspondents had horses at that time, and those night tramps over trails knee-deep in mud and across streams swollen by torrential rains will live forever in the memories of those who performed them. Every half mile or so they were forced aside into the cactus thickets that lined the trail to allow the passage of pack trains of mules carrying ammunition, or regiments of reinforcements floundering through the mud to the firing line. By daylight they themselves had to be back at the front. For forty-eight hours many of the correspondents did not sleep, but worked on without thought of self, intent only upon getting the great news to the cable. In such times of stress it is not too much to say that no set of men will endure more in the enthusiasm of their profession than newspaper men.

After Santiago fell the situation was relieved somewhat by the opening of the cable there. On the day Gen. Shafter entered the city and the Spanish flag over the palace was hauled down to permit the American banner to be hoisted in its place, the seven newspaper correspondents out of over a hundred in Cuba who accompanied the victorious general were in high spirits over the prospect of having a cable at their disposal upon which to file descriptions of that wonderfully impressive scene. But when the cable office refused to accept a single message collect (the rate was $1.08 a word) their spirits fell. Cash was scarce, and there was no time to cable for authority to send collect messages. Money must be found. The army officers were besieged for loans, but none could be found with more than a few dollars in his pocket. The Associated Press correspondent, however, managed to find a quartermaster who had $300. This was promptly borrowed, and it paid for the longest dispatch sent out of Santiago that day. The next day cabled authority was obtained to send messages collect.

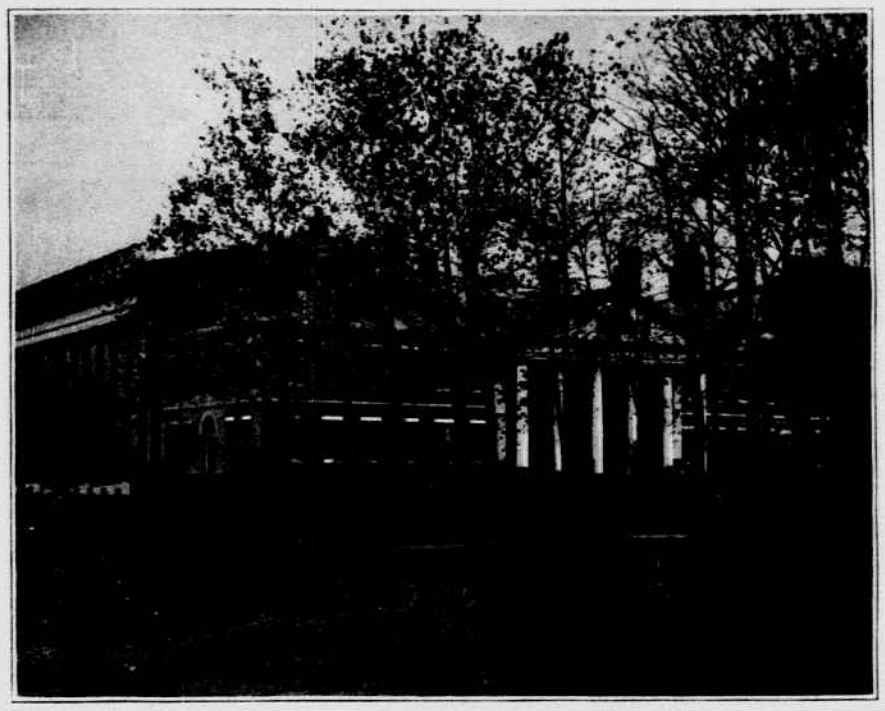
The sea fight outside of Santiago afforded another great opportunity for the correspondents. As ill-luck would have it, of all the dispatch boats on the south side of Cuba, that time but two were present to witness the smashing of Cervera's fleet.

This is accounted for by the fact that the idea that Cervera would come out of the "hole in the wall" had been practically abandoned and all attention was centered on the exciting event ashore. The story of the race for the wire in Jamaica on that occasion is thrilling in the extreme, but is too long to be told here.

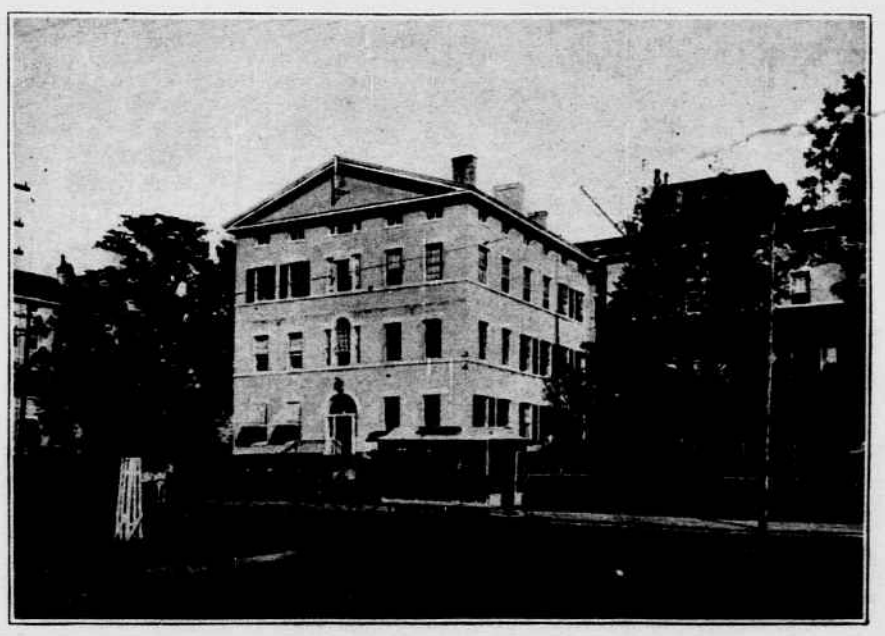
With Miles in Porto Rico.

Over in Porto Rico, when General Miles arrived there for his well-planned campaign against General Macias, the situation was much better from a newspaper standpoint. Ponce, the first point seized after the landing was effected at Guanica, had a cable connection, and as the columns of Miles' invading army were pushed out into the island the field telegraph kept up with their advance, and the correspondents were permitted to use these lines sparingly to get their stories to Ponce, whence they were cabled to the United States. One of the most ludicrous contretemps of the war, so far as the correspondents were concerned, occurred in Porto Rico, when General Jas. H. Wilson flanked the enemy out of Coamo on the Ibonito road. This is the famous military road across the island. The night before the movement began the five correspondents with the column were informed of the plan of battle. Two regiments, under the command of Col. Huling of the 14th Pennsylvania, made a long night march to the rear of the town to cut off the retreat of the enemy when the main body should make the front attack upon the town. Early the next morning Wilson's column advanced under cover of several batteries, which were used to shell the Spaniards out of the block houses to the right of Coamo.

The correspondents, all of whom were mounted, waited until they saw the Spaniards decamp and heard the rattle of musketry in the rear of the town. Thinking Coamo had fallen into Huling's hands, and not desiring to wait for General Wilson's slow-moving column to enter it from the



THE OLD STATE DEPARTMENT.



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